

Lunch Menu Planning Checklist for Five-day Week • Grades 6-8

This checklist assists schools with planning meals to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal pattern requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). For detailed information on the NSLP meal patterns, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns](#) Web page and [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

Lunch	Yes	No ¹
Each meal includes all five components: meat/meat alternates, grains, fruits, vegetables and milk.		
Milk	Yes	No ¹
All milk offered is low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored.		
At least two different varieties of milk are offered.		
Whole and reduced fat (2%) milk are not served.		
Fruits Component	Yes	No ¹
Each meal includes at least ½ cup of fruit. ²		
The weekly menu includes at least 2 ½ cups of fruit. ²		
If served, 100% fruit juice does not exceed half of the weekly fruits component, i.e., no more than 1 ¼ cups. (Indicate "N/A" if fruit juice is not served.)		
Vegetables Component	Yes	No ¹
Each meal includes at least ¾ cup of vegetable ²		
The weekly menu includes at least 3 ¾ cups of vegetables ²		
The weekly menu meets all vegetable subgroups (3 ¾ cups total):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark Green: ½ cup dark offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Red/Orange: ¾ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Beans and Peas (Legumes): ½ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Starchy: ½ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ½ cup offered weekly (or dark green, red/orange, beans/peas or starchy) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup of additional vegetables offered weekly to reach 3 ¾ cups total (choose from any of the five vegetable subgroups)		
If served, 100% vegetable juice does not exceed half of the weekly vegetables component, i.e., no more than 1 7/8 cups. (Indicate "N/A" if fruit juice is not served.)		
Leafy greens such as romaine lettuce and fresh spinach are counted as only half of the actual portion size served, i.e., 1 cup of leafy greens equals ½ cup of vegetable.		
Grains Component	Yes	No ¹
Each meal includes at least 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of grains.		
The weekly menu includes 8-10 oz eq of grains. ²		
All grains are whole grain-rich. For more information, see Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods .		
Grain-based desserts are limited to no more than 2 oz eq per week.		
Meat/Meat Alternates (M/MA)Component	Yes	No ¹
Each meal includes at least 1 oz eq of M/MA.		
The weekly menu includes 9-10 oz eq of M/MA. ²		

Offer versus Serve	Yes	No ¹
Students are required to select at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable for a reimbursable meal.		
In addition to ½ cup of fruit or vegetable, students are required to select the full portion of at least two other components for a reimbursable meal.		
Dietary Specifications (Nutrient Standards) for Weekly Menus ³ (Indicate "unknown" if you do not conduct your own nutrient analysis.)	Yes	No ¹
Calories are within the allowable range of 600-700 calories.		
Saturated fat is less than 10% of total calories.		
Sodium does not exceed 1,360milligrams. <i>This first sodium target is in effect through June 30, 2017.</i>		
All nutrition labels and manufacturer specifications indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving.		

- 1 If "no" is checked for any of the statements above, the menu does not comply with the meal pattern requirements. Check the menu and revise accordingly.
- 2 Larger amounts of milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and meat/meat alternates may be served only if meals do not exceed the weekly limit for calories, saturated fat and sodium.
- 3 Schools are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis of menus. The CSDE will conduct a nutrient analysis as part of the state administrative review.

Menu Planning Resources

Crediting Foods: www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=333796
 Seven-day Meal Patterns: www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=334100
 Menu Planning Guide for School Meals: www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=334320
 USDA Food Buying Guide: www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs
 Vegetable Subgroups: www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/vegetable_groups.pdf

This document is available at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/mpchecklist6-8.pdf.

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